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Chief, Geographic Research

28 January 1959

THRU : Chief, Geography Division  
Chief, Far East Branch, D/GG

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Atlas of China

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1. [REDACTED] has asked for GRA comments on the attached memorandum from Deputy Chief, M/AG, prior to forwarding it to the AD/RR.

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2. In order to make our comments as meaningful as possible,

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[REDACTED] and I went to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] on 23 January, to see [REDACTED] and examine his

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materials for the proposed atlas. We also met and conferred with

[REDACTED] the cartographer who has worked [REDACTED] on the project. 25X1A5a1

We did not see or talk with [REDACTED]

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3. In the course of the conversation, it was learned that

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two inquiries had been made by [REDACTED] concerning

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possible financing for publication of the atlas prior to the

contact with [REDACTED]. These contacts were the Prentice-

Hall and the Ford Foundation, but neither attempt was successful.

For your own information, it is apparent that [REDACTED] as a researcher, 25X1A5a1

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feels that [REDACTED] as an administrator, has not been sufficiently active in his attempts to secure financial backing for publication of the atlas.

4. The chief value of the atlas, as we see it, would be as a convenient single-volume compendium, in the English language, of a large mass of data on numerous aspects of the geography of China. However, it is seriously weakened by its excessive dependence on pre-1949 source materials, even though significant amounts of more recent source data -- of Communist origin -- are available to U.S. academicians. When queried concerning his use of more recent data, including, for example, the numerous items that have been made available through the Joint Publications Research Service,

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[REDACTED] indicated that his purpose was to produce a piece of scholarly research -- a "point of departure" -- and that he had no desire to "compete with the government" in performing research based on more current data. He did indicate, however, that he would do a limited amount of updating of such features as railways and provincial boundaries if actual publication were imminent.

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SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Atlas of China

5. Following are GG/F comments concerning individual subject groupings of maps and graphs:

a. Climatic maps. These are probably the most worthwhile of the series and would be a useful reference to have as a research tool. This is especially true of those depicting the results of climatological analysis dealing with deviations from the norm.

b. Agricultural maps. Their chief value is that they consolidate information from a number of different sources into a convenient single format. Recent agricultural developments in China, however, insure the obsolescence of the information. The maps depicting tenancy rates by province, for example, have been rendered totally invalid (except for historical value) by communalization.

c. Physical geography. These maps and terrain profiles, while interesting, would be chiefly of value for teaching. Geologic, soils, tectonic, and related maps are readily available from other sources, including recent Chinese atlases.

d. Transportation, electric power, mineral resources. Information depicted on these maps is now badly out-of-date. The limited amount of updating envisaged by [REDACTED] will not appreciably increase their value.

e. Sociological maps. The population dot map would be of some limited usefulness in its manuscript scale, although it is now out-of-date. Other population distribution and density maps are available, including Trewartha's dot map issued in 1957 and Chicom-issued density maps that depict 1953 census results. [REDACTED] ethnic map is out-classified by more recent and more detailed maps published by the Communists.

6. In summary, it is felt that the proposed atlas would not be of sufficient unique value for intelligence purposes to justify the expenditure of CIA funds to support its publication. Furthermore, we feel that without major updating of substantive data through more

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SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

Atlas of China

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extensive use of post-1949 Chinese source materials, [REDACTED] will continue to have difficulty in attracting financial support from either commercial publishers or research foundations funds. This does not ignore the fact that some of the maps on basic subjects would, if reproduced separately, make worthwhile additions to the CIA Map Library.

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[REDACTED]

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